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When Goldenrod Blooms

and Other Poems

by

Mildred Tate Wells

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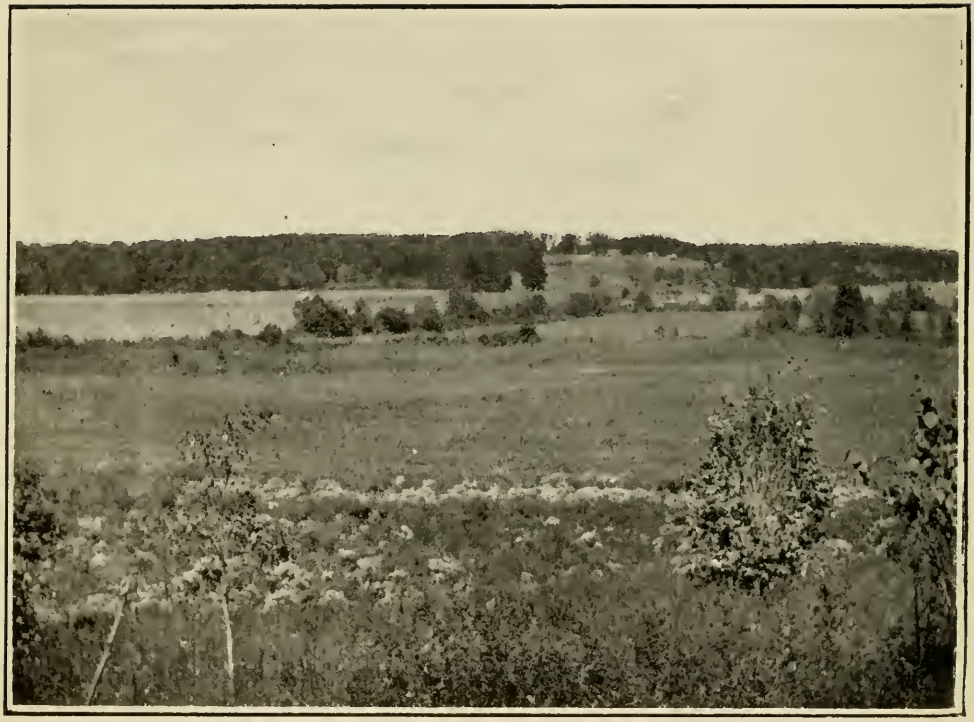
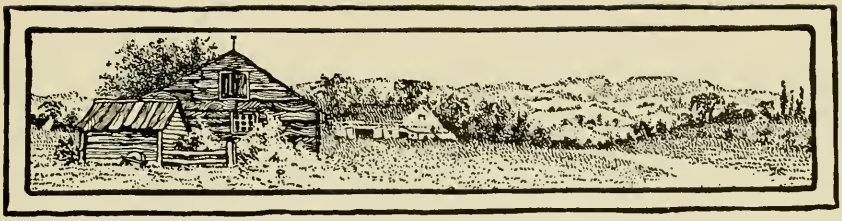
"THERE'S never a song that is worth the singing
But half of the strain is somewhere ringing
In the depths of some music-hungry heart,
Bereft of the power to sing its part."

If these simple songs—for my friends—find the "other half," in hearts attuned to unsung melodies, I shall feel they are "worth the singing."

THE AUTHOR.



Like a dream of peace, the sunlight
Falls o'er fields and wooded hills,
Over broad, dew-sprinkled meadows,
Over rippling, murmuring rills.



WHEN GOLDENROD BLOOMS.

Like a dream of peace, the sunlight
  Falls o'er fields and wooded hills,
Over broad, dew-sprinkled meadows,
  Over rippling, murmuring rills;
And the winged winds in their passing
  Gather up the sweet perfume
From the clematis and primrose,
  When the goldenrod's in bloom.

Birds that soon will leave their old haunts
  Chirp and twitter a farewell,
And the myriad leaves, arustle,
  Secrets of the summer tell:
While a feeling that we're standing
  Within Heaven's ante-room,
Abides, like a benediction,
  While the goldenrod's in bloom.

Dreamily the cow-bells tingle
  At the closing of the day,
And the music wafted to us
  Seems so far, so far, away!
As if coming down dim, shaded ways
  From fields where children trod,
Driving home the gentle cattle
  By hedgerows of goldenrod.

In the hazy, shimmering sunshine
Thoughts of "Auld Lang Syne" are writ,
And loved voices are borne to us
On the breezes, as they flit
Through fair scenes of gold and crimson,
O'er the drooping, feathery plume
Of the queen of autumn flowers,
Sceptered goldenrod a-bloom.

Now is one with all the future,
And with days that have passed by,
"Things not seen" speak through the "things seen"
Of a glorious by and by.
Unseen power draws the heart life
Nearer to the loving God,
When bright sunbeams are entangled
In the smiling goldenrod.

THE MARCH OF THE SEASONS.

The seasons come and seasons go,
But they are new each year.
We welcome the first flowers and birds
That in the spring appear,
As if they were *really* the *first;*
And when the bright leaves fall,
The flowers fade and birds fly south,
We feel we've lost them all:
But spring comes into sight again,
And earth is made anew,
We sing of springs that have passed on
And of the one in view.
Each year the seasons, as they pass,
New beauties do unfold;
And past associations draw
Us nearer to the old.

SPRING IS COMING.

Spring is coming! hear the bluebird
The glad news to earth proclaim,
In a soft, prophetic prelude,
As if he from Heaven came.
Then in rapture he spills music,
And we know Spring's waking up;
Life is pulsing through all nature
From great oak to butter-cup.
Balmy winds and golden sunshine
Foretell Spring will be here soon,
"Haste," they whisper, "to be growing,
Bud and leaf and fragrant bloom."

Spring is coming, coming, coming!
For the blue thrush tells us so.
When he sings in tones ecstatic,
Each note touches Spring's bright glow.
Once more when the great Creator
Speaks His *come forth,* 'twill be done,
Plants and grass and buds and blossoms
Will all heed the call as one.
The blue harbinger of Springtime
Sings in glad, exultant strain:
"All is life, the Easter morning,
Will soon dawn on earth again!"

APRIL.

The tree-top tenants are at home
  And busy as can be
Selecting mates and building nests,
  And serenading me.
Red wings are flashing thro the trees,
  Listen, and you will hear
The optimistic cardinal
  Sing his che-er! che-er! what che-er!

Out in the orchard, mocking-bird
  Sings near his busy mate;
The wood thrush wakes us with a song,
  And Bob White whistles late:
Brown thrashers, wrens, and tanagers,
  Bluebirds and vireos,
Sing here and there—'most everywhere—
  From day's dawn 'till its close.

The early flowers have all waked,
  And peeped outside to see
About this concert of the birds,
  And to smile on their glee.
The meadows are with bluets starred,
  And by the meadow brook
You'll find spring beauties, violets,
  And vetch, if you will look.

Cinquefoil creeps from its winter bed
  Where grass is springing up,
And daffodil, in sunny spot,
  Holds up a golden cup.
Such wealth of bloom, song and sunshine
  As Aprils to us bring,
Sometimes almost tempt us to
  Wish it were always spring.

JUNE.

Life is at high tide,
  In the month of June;
Flowers are busy blooming,
  And birds are all in tune.
The busy bees all hum,
  Mosquitoes, too, and flies,
The mercury's busy climbing
  Towards June's unclouded skies.
The sun puts in full time—
  Heat with old Sol agrees—
It seems there's nothing idle,
  But a playful, cooling breeze.
When we hunt for that breeze
  Out in our shady yard,
All red-bugs that are unattached
  Become our body-guard.
O June, you are most fair!
  To that we all agree;
But the *muchness* of you makes us tired—
  As tired as we can be.
We can't half do justice to
  All that you have on tap;
So we will fan awhile, and then
  Perhaps we'll take a nap.

OCTOBER.

A black crow tilts on the tapering top
  Of a rustling poplar tree,
With a caw! caw! caw! to the passerby
  Of what they may hear and see,
Since autumn came; and his cousin jay,
  In black and white and blue,
Flies hurriedly after another nut,
  And to tell a secret to you.

It was "Peter-eat-it" he calls abroad,
  (As secrets should often be told)
But a flaming tanager sings "cheat, cheat,"
  As if that secret were old.
The crickets chirp where smilax vines
  Are shading the cinquefoil sear,
While ladder-back drums, on a resonant limb,
  His signal that autumn is here.

September is fair with her golden flowers,
  And her fare-well summer, blue,
But October days are fairer than all;
  When the forests in every hue
Are painted as no mortal paints:
  The skill of the Master's hand,
Is clearly revealed, in this month of months,
  Through the length and breadth of the land.

The poets may sing of summer time,
  Of the fair, rare days of June;
But me for the days when the sun goes south,
  And we fall in love with the moon,
As she queens it over the biggest half
  Of hours that come and go,
While summer song still rings in the air,
  And October reigns below.

OLD ASSOCIATIONS.

Written in memory of a golden-haired namesake, who, one time, gathered wild roses by the old rail fence, and on a long gone June day, in the midst of her mates, recited:

"If I were a rose on the garden wall
I'd look so fair and grow so tall,
I'd scatter perfume far and wide,
Of all the flowers, I'd be the pride;
That's what I'd do if I were you,
O sweet, wild rose."

Down the rail fence of the past days with Memory we go,
Past meadows green with fresh-grown grass or pine groves white with snow;
By sedgefields where the rabbit hid when high-piled snow was white,
And past the stream where violets grew and birds sang with delight.
Sweet Williams grew in clusters there in corners all along,
And from a screen of berry vines, song sparrow trilled his song.
Rich black-eyed Susans, asters blue, and ferns and mosses green—
A gorgeous wayside company—by the rail fence were seen.

But sweeter than all other flowers that blossomed by the way,
Was the pink, fragrant elegantine, the fairest flower of May.
Down the flower-covered old rail fence Memory carries us along;
As we go we catch the echo of a long-forgotten song,
See the fair face of the singer by the blooming wild rose vines,
Dimly, as we see the flowers, thro a mist of tears it shines.
Like a wild rose-bud, the bright life for a while our joy and pride—
Long since climbed from sight, to blossom over on the Other Side.

WINTER.

Autumn's colors are faded, her flowers are gone
From the hills and the valleys below,
The leaves are all withered, and lie in brown heaps,
Awaiting a blanket of snow.
The bird nests are empty—many song-birds have flown
Where summer never grows old;
Great forest trees stand, like sentinels grim,
With their branches bared to the cold.
Old winter is here, and isn't he dear!
With beautiful snow, and frost-jewels rare,
And the tingle of icicles in the cold air!

We lift our eyes to the hills etched with light,
And thoughts in gratitude rise,
To the Maker of all this glorious earth,
And the wonderful dome of the skies.
The gorgeous sunrises are clear to the view,
And sunsets the portals swing wide
To a land of far views, where the purified walk
With the Savior of man by their side.
Old winter is dear! we're glad he is here.
He brushes cob-webs from unseeing eyes,
More clearly we see how our blessings to prize.

In winter, when we walk thro the aisles of pine woods
With unveiled face, we can see
The love that cares for the birds sheltered there,
As well as for you and for me.
On cold winter evenings how bright are the stars
That blossom in meadows on high!
How reverent the thought—that like clear smoke
From incense—ascends to the sky!
O winter, we extend you glad welcome once more—
With clarified view we see ourselves small,
And give glory to God supreme—All-in-all!

THE SPRING BENEATH THE HILL.

The ploughboy whistles happily as he trudges down the rows,
And calls a clear whoa! gee-up! gee! gee!
The plough turns up the mellow earth as the sturdy boy plods on
Oh, who on earth so glad and free as he?

While Bob White whistles cheerily in the meadow up the slope,
And nesting mate calls back across the way;
Bright sunbeams fall o'er field and hill from Sol's chariot in the blue;
What a gloriously perfect day in May!

With a clear, ringing haw-up there! the farm boy turns his team,
Where trees throw shadows cool along the rill;
And with bared head he hastes away where cold water bubbles up,
In the fern-surrounded spring beneath the hill.

With steady hand he dips the gourd down into sparkling depths,
And down the hill rings cardinals' song of cheer,
On whispering breeze, that cools the brow of the boy who drinks his fill,
Of cold water from the spring so deep and clear.

'Tis nectar fit for gods to drink so sparkling, cold and pure,
From dripping gourd—oh, how the pulses thrill
With memories of those yesterdays, when plough-boy quenched his thirst
At the spring, on father's farm, beneath the hill!

OUR JOLLY BLUEJAY.

Listen to his scream of joy—
  Jay! jay! jay!
It hastens sluggish heart-beats,
  And drives the blues away.
If you are sad and weary,
And the day seems long and dreary,
Watch this gay, crested prophet,
  Hear what he has to say.

Jay! jay! come on, be free,
And spring's resurrection see:
We'll show you, too, our bran-new home,
My loyal mate and me.

His song is just jay! jay!
  And jay! jay! jay!
But it may mean many, many things,
  And glad ones every day.
Slip off the old tired feeling,
Go hunt a robe of healing,
Marching to his stirring music
  O'er hills and far away.

Hear! spring has come, I say,
Leave your four walls today;
Bask in the sunshine, drink deep draughts
Of air like wine, jay! jay!

The red puccoons and trilliums
  Have heard the call of spring,
And maples to the balmy breeze
  Their scarlet banners fling.
Home-coming birds are singing,
As to old haunts they're winging;
We join the glad spring chorus
  That makes the woodland ring.

We're with you, jolly jay,
For a long picnic day,
In field and wood, with birds and bloom,
Lead on—away, away.

FACING THE EAST.

The sun is slipping out of sight,
One more day's race is o'er—
He throws last rays from hill to hill,
A flash from shore to shore;
Then sinks from view, and shadows fall
Where sunshine's erstwhile been:
Now turn about and face the east
'Till morning comes again.

Aye, face the east, our hope of dawn
When shades of night are raised,
To carry in our hearts the glow
Of western skies that blazed
In glory, at the set of sun,
Will light the gloomy way,
And God-sent peace will be with us
So long as shadows stay.

Face toward the east whate'er betide,
God over-rules the night;
The day will break in His own time,
And pour her flood of light
O'er shadowed ways, where you and I
Have walked, as gloom increased,
He sees the Morning Star, and dawn,
Whose face is toward the east.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN.

For the most part earth is silent,
  Save where winds untrammeled blow
Thrô the sunshine-sprinkled woodland,
  Making music soft and low;
Or in long aisles of the pine grove
  They strike chords on a hidden lyre,
And the soughing music rises
  In pulsations—sweeter, higher;
On the hills bird-songs are ringing,
  Rippling streams thro valleys flow,
But for most part earth is silent,
  As the shadows come and go.

Silent is the dome above us,
  Not a sound comes from the blue;
Naught but calm, unwearied watching
  Over me and over you.
Silent, too, star-lighted spaces,
  Unless angels come and go,
And make music in their passing
  As the winds for us below.
Murmuring heart, be thou as silent,
  In submission learn the will
Of the One whose life as God-man
  Speaks to all life: "Peace, be still."

THE HILLS OF HOME.

To east and west great mountains lift
  Snow-crested heads on high,
And valleys all a-blossom rest
  Under the bending sky;
Yet north or south or east or west,
  Beneath the star-gemmed dome,
There's nothing quite so beautiful
  As the old hills of home.

Majestic rivers noiseless flow
  Between rich banks of green,
Or waters leap down some incline
  In wondrous, mystic sheen.
While noble ships the oceans sail
  And churn to snowy foam,
The emerald waters, still there's naught
  Lovely as hills of home.

The hills where we as children played,
  Where violets soonest blow,
And dogwood earliest to the breeze
  Its pink-tipped blossoms throw,
These draw like Heaven, and we know
  Wherever we may roam.
Our thoughts will often wander back
  To stray o'er hills of home.

And resting there from stress and strife
  Will view the Promised Land;
With childhood's faith, will see held out
  To us, the guiding hand
To lead us cross the mist-hid vale,
  O'er loftier heights to roam—
The everlasting hills of Heaven,
  Will then be hills of home.

THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE

The world is so full of trouble,
We so very often hear:
Isn't it as full of gladness,
Sympathy and love and cheer?
If we look for flaws we find them,
Look for trouble, it is ours;
Why not listen for the joy-bells,
Shun the thorns, and gather flowers?
Clouds will sometimes hide the sunlight,
But we know they cannot last,
Think how radiant is the sunset
When a stormy day is past.
Smile, and smiles will brightly blossom,
On the lips of those we greet;
Love, and love will be reflected,
In the eyes of all we meet.
Stars behind the clouds are shining,
Afterwhile they'll come in sight:
Hope—our beacon star— is beaming
For us in the darkest night.
God is smiling on His children,
Watching us with loving care;
If we bravely bear our crosses,
We will in His glory share.

BEYOND THE ALPS.

Beyond the Alps the earth's made new,
And perfect are the fragrant flowers,
That smile and sparkle thro the dew,
Of morning's early, untouched hours.

Beyond the heights orange blossoms blow
To wreathe the brow of him whose claim
Is, that undaunted he'd pressed on,
Had reached the goal, and so won fame.

The rugged steeps, like stern foes stand,
But only up them lie the ways,
That lead to Italy's dark-blue skies,
Which over-arch her peerless days.

Then let us climb with purpose true,
Toward mist-veiled summits of our day,
Till we can see, with broader view,
That every cloud has rolled away.

And that to gain this vantage point,
O'er hardest, roughest ways we've passed,
And may yet scale sun-lighted heights,
And rest in Italy at last.

FULFILLMENT.

In the woods and in the fields,
  On the hills and by the stream,
You can hear October call,
  See her dazzling colors gleam.
Looking 'neath the surface life
  You the ruling Hand may see,
And fulfilled, in nature's ways,
  Spring's recurring prophesy.

By the singing, tinkling rill
  Is the full corn in the ear;
White to harvest lie in view
  Fields of cotton, far and near.
Root-crops ripening underfoot,
  Ripening nuts hang overhead—
Seed-time followed, year by year,
  By the harvest, as 'twas said.

O, October, fair and rare,
  With your flaming views unrolled!
Mornings lift a pink portiere,
  Evenings drop one of old gold;
Your skies are an azure blue,
  Sunshine smiles in goldenrod:
Thro this transformed world we draw
  Near to nature's wondrous God.

Musing, when the day is done,—
  In the sunset's golden glow—
Of a year's hopes realized,
  As Octobers come and go;
'Tis an earnest that from seed,
  Sown while we these earth-ways roam,
Will grow sheaves that we may bear
  To the final "Harvest Home."

TRUE LIVING.

If we were as helpful as breezes that blow,
  As cheerful as birds of the air,
As useful as sunbeams that sparkle and glow,
  And, like flowers, could banish dull care;

It would be worth while to live thro the days,
  And enter the shadows of night:
Thro the hours would flow full measures of praise,
  And stars would foreshadow the light

That another day held, for the heart full of trust
  In the Maker of night, as of day,
While shadows lay dark, as aye shadows must,
  Lie across the sunniest way.

To live a life free from all turmoil and strife
  Would be life as the All-wise decreed,
And moments with distrust and sorrow now rife
  From every dark blot would be freed.

To live every day as if 'twere the last
  Of our earth-days left to enjoy,
And as if every moment that passed
  Was one less in which to employ

The God-bestowed talents, in our one little life,
  Living thus, our whole life would be
A glad hymn of praise, 'till we leave our worn shells
  By the shore of life's unresting sea.

And, released, we pass on over the bar
  To the higher life, where we will lay
The talents we've won by the throne of life's King,
  And, anew, begin an unshadowed day.

Bare trees give a benediction,
And wave a good-bye.

WHEN LEAVES FALL.

Fluttering, whirling, waltzing, sailing,
In brigades the leaves come down;
Scarlet, crimson, golden-yellow,
Russet, red and brown.

Scampering thro the open windows,
Dancing, skimming swiftly by:
Like winged creatures gaily playing,
Here and there they fly.

With a clatter how they scatter,
As from parent trees they leap!
And with rustling murmurs settle
For a long, long sleep.

Never was there picture fairer,
Than the autumn woods alight,
Ere the leaves of many colors
Fall, with a good-night.

And no carpet e'er was woven,
Equal to the one that's spread,
When the trees send first their brightest,
Fairest leaves to bed.

But the last leaf falls, and bare trees—
In relief against the sky—
Seem to give a benediction,
And wave a good-bye.

THE TRIUNE I.

Great and glorious creation, this immortal triune I!
Like a chrysalis, enshrouded with God's love so strong and deep,
Growing for triumphant flight beyond earth's stretch of sky,
Into a life of light undimmed where endless ages sweep.

With heart we feel the beating of the Triune Heart, and love
Is kindled, glows, and throb for throb, it ever pulses on,
To touch the great encircling love, beneath, around, above—
'Till Heaven is reached, where Christ, the Lord of blood-bought I, has gone.

With never-resting mind we think of life and all it brings,
Of all the hidden mysteries that mortal eyes can't see;
While present joys and sorrows speed, as Time its swift flight wings,
'Till heart and mind find rest and peace in calm eternity.

And with immortal soul we see, the Christ, and angel throng,
Where a house of many mansions is prepared for you and me;
That home of love and endless life where saints join in the song,
"Glory and praise forevermore, our Savior, Lord, to Thee!"

O wonderful, God-spoken I,—the breath of Life thy strength—
When e'er thy Lord a courier sends in aspect cold and grim,
'Tis only to brush back the dark, and in the light at length,
On pinions strong enough for flight, thou wilt soar away to Him.

LOVE AND GRACE.

When love reigns, grace keeps company;
O draw us nearer,
To Thee, our Father! may Thy Son—
The merciful, and loving One—
Grow daily dearer!

We pray for grace, when God is Love,
And we His offspring!
If we'd but walk with Him each day—
Just follow where He leads the way—
Father and King.

Grace would uphold, whate'er the strife,
Why have we striven?
When thus the weakest may be strong,
The sinfullest o'ercome, ere long,
Through grace that's given?

When Love and Love's child are at one
Strivings will cease;
Grace will envelope, Love will lead,
Past every shadow of any need,
To perfect peace.

SOAR ALOFT.

Soar aloft. Why linger here
  Where the morning mists hang low?
Up and out from thoughts of night,
Onward to a higher height,
  With your guardian angel go.

Soar aloft. The days are long
  When the mountain top is gained:
As the lark soars toward the skies,
Starting song-waves as she flies,
  Why not human souls, unchained?

Soar aloft. 'Tis better far
  To evade some things we know—
Rise above the ones that hurt,
Cares that hinder, doubts alert—
  Than to grovel here below.

Soar aloft. Bright Hope is there
  Painting pictures on life's skies:
What if they *should* fade away
Ere we reach them, as they may?
  To have seen them helps us rise.

Soar aloft. A Destiny
  Truly holds the threads of woof,
That must be thrown in our life,
Back and forth thro warp of strife,
  While souls *seem* to stand aloof.

Still, they work with Destiny—
  Soar aloft, for it is true,
That the fabric e'er grows fairer,
As 'tis woven in the rarer
  Airs of Heaven, that sweep the blue.

NOW.

Anything that you may do,
That will help along the way
Toward building true character,
Get about it while you may.

"Our todays and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build."
Wise is he whose every niche
Of today, is filled.

If you have anything to say,
That will make the sun shine bright
Thro the shadows, for another,
Say it, for soon will come night.

As we walk along the way
Of the present, all that's ours,
We can make the lives around us
Blossom out with flowers.

If you have kind deeds to do,
Do them while today is new;
If they're put off 'till tomorrow,
That chance is e'er lost to you.

If for us there's a tomorrow,
Work, for it is given too;
If our *now* is left completed,
There'll be plenty still to do.

Give the "glad hand" to your neighbor,
Smiles to all who pass your way,
Love and cheer to the discouraged,
Freely give, 'tis the Christ's way.

Build from glory on to glory
With blocks filled by the most High,
And the character, completed,
Will the Godhead glorify.

MARRIED AND MATED.

The vows are said which make them one
For happiness or woe;
They've pledged themselves thro light and gloom
Together they will go.
The die is cast, and days to be,
From this day will be dated:
This day when two, by mortal law,
Are married—are they mated?

The bride folds with the bridal gown
Her care-free days away,
But strong in love and faith, assumes
The duties of the day.
Adjustment to new views and ways,
Begins, for these two—fated
To walk the path of days as one—
Wedded—but are they mated?

"Two lives with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one,"
Two souls to strive in unison,
'Till strife of life is done.
With rare forbearings, sympathy,
And service, rightly rated;
Thus is a marriage made in Heaven,
And two souls here are mated.

They "know not where His islands lift
  Their fronded palms in air;
But only know they cannot drift
  Beyond His love and care."
And as they climb to loftier planes,
  Tho slow, and oft belated—
With hand in hand, and heart to heart,
  They'll go, for they are mated.

LUCILE, OF MAKE-LIKE LAND.

Her eyes are blue as bits of sky,
  Her curls like fine spun gold,
Like ripe, red cherries are her lips;
  This maid of three years old.
And oh, the questions she can ask,
  The make-like games can play,
When she trips 'cross the meadow field
  To see me every day!

She lays her "bontet" on the bed,
  Shakes out her dress and curls,
And seats herself most lady-like,
  Like all nice little girls.
"Am you got any pa?" she asks,
  "Am Santa Kaus got one?
Oh, ess pay go to see some folks—
  We will have ess 'ots o' fun!"

The lamp mat is her make-like hat,
  Or an old pan, for a change;
Her baby is a cape rolled up,
  And then how very strange
That she must live behind the bed!
  The springs her "desser" are:
And when she comes to visit me,
  She comes so awful far.

"I'm are Miss Maxwell now," she says,
"See I'm not as same as you;
Yes, my baby seeps des a whole 'ot,
Him's eyes? Why em are bue:
The am not nussinbody with my other childs,
An' I mus' go back now—
You mus' come to see me soon," she adds,
And leaves me with a bow.

We visit, then we have a lunch,
Of cake, and biscuit brown;
"Do you all ug ees kin'?" she asks,
Then from her chair jumps down:
"After 'rectly I mus' go home," she says:
And soon she's tripping away,
Thro Make-like Land, where I long again—
As a care-free child—to play.

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